# What every parent should know about LEAD LEVELS IN CHILDREN





INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH 2 NORTH MERIDIAN ST. INDIANAPOLIS INDIANA 46204-3021

# WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "LEAD LEVELS IN CHILDREN"?



This booklet is not a substitute for an informed discussion with a qualified health-care provider regarding lead exposure, or for any federal, state or local guidelines.





For your child's sake — as well as your own — take the time to learn about lead exposure.

# THERE ARE MANY SOURCES OF LEAD

#### For example:

#### PAINT

with a high lead content was used in millions of U.S. homes before 1978. It was also used on some toys and furniture.

#### DUST

may contain lead from house paint or nearby remodeling projects.

#### SOIL

may have lead in it from exterior lead paint chips and dust, lead-based insect sprays and highway pollution (due to past use of lead in gasoline).



#### FOOD

may be contaminated. This may occur if food is:

- grown in soil that contains lead
- stored in poorly glazed pottery, in open cans with lead seams, or in lead crystal
- prepared by someone who has lead dust on his or her hands.

#### WATER

may pick up lead as it flows through plumbing with lead pipes, fixtures or solder.

#### OTHER SOURCES INCLUDE:

- · some cosmetics and folk medicines
- · certain hobbies, such as making leaded stained glass
- · some porcelain and pottery
- · lead objects, such as lead bullets, antique toys and fishing sinkers.

Children are usually exposed when they put paint, soil, dust or other materials containing lead into their mouths.

## LEAD MAY CAUSE MANY PROBLEMS

#### LOW LEVELS OF LEAD EXPOSURE

can harm a child's brain and nervous system. This may cause:

- · hearing problems
- · behavior problems
- · learning problems.



#### VERY HIGH LEVELS OF LEAD EXPOSURE

may cause:

- · coma
- · convulsions
- · death.



#### SYMPTOMS OF HIGH LEAD LEVELS

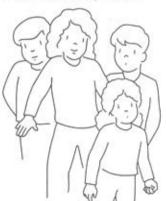
are often mistaken for other illnesses. Common signs include:

- · poor appetite
- · crankiness
- stomachaches
   loss of energy
- vomiting
- · headaches
- constipation
- · trouble sleeping.



#### MOST CHILDREN HAVE NO SYMPTOMS.

even though a screening test indicates a lead problem.



Fortunately, prompt care can limit the effects of lead exposure.

# WHEN CHILDREN SHOULD BE SCREENED

According to current guidelines\*:

#### ALL CHILDREN

should be screened at 12 and 24 months of age, unless they're identified as being at "high risk."



#### HIGH-RISK CHILDREN

should be screened starting at 6 months. High-risk children are those who:

- live or often spend time in housing built before 1960 -- especially if it has peeling or chipping paint, or is being remodeled
- have a brother or sister with a high blood lead level
- live with an adult whose job or hobby involves the use of lead
- live near an industry likely to give off lead, such as a lead smelter or battery recycling plant.



#### IF YOUR CHILD HAS NEVER BEEN SCREENED,

contact your health-care provider right away.

#### ASK YOUR HEALTH-CARE PROVIDER

for details about screening schedules. Have follow-up screenings as recommended.

\*Additional screening may be suggested, as necessary. Some states have different screening requirements.



SCREENING TESTS HELP CHECK BLOOD LEAD LEVELS

Blood may be taken from a finger prick or a vein in your child's arm. Results may have to be confirmed by a second test, if a problem is suspected.

#### BLOOD LEAD LEVELS ARE MEASURED

in "micrograms" of lead per "deciliter" of blood, or "mcg/dL."

risk level	BLOOD LEAD LEVEL	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Very Low	0-9 mcg/dL	No further action.
Low	10-14 mcg/dL	Rescreen every 3-4 months. Take steps to keep your child lead-safe (see page 11).
Moderate	15-19 mcg/dL	Rescreen every 3-4 months.  Health-care providers should provide dietary and lead prevention counseling. Identify and remove obvious lead hazards.
High	20-44 mcg/dL	Complete medical evaluation.  Find and get rid of lead hazards in the child's environment (home, school, and play areas).
	45-69 mcg/dL	Medical treatment and inspection of environment within 48 hours.
Urgent	70 mcg/dL or above	Medical emergency. Immediate medical treatment and inspection of environment.



#### FURTHER TESTS

may suggest:

To help pinpoint the level of lead and possible health effects, a health-care provider may recommend:

- · blood tests
- X-rays
- · urine tests.

### A HOSPITAL STAY

Some children with high levels of lead may need to be treated in a hospital.



#### FOLLOW-UP CARE

Children may need more tests to be sure the level of lead has been reduced. It's very important to have all recommended follow-up tests, even when children seem to be well.



("chelation") Some children may be given a drug that combines with lead and carries it out of the body in urine. If there's a lot of lead, more than one round of treatment may be needed.



# TO HELP MAKE TREATMENT SUCCESSFUL, IDENTIFY -- AND ELIMINATE -- SOURCES OF LEAD

Sources of lead may be found in the home, school, yard or places a child frequently visits. For help in identifying sources of lead, contact your state or local health department or housing or building authority.

#### HAZARD REMOVAL MUST BE DONE PROPERLY

Improper lead paint removal may increase the risk! Consider hiring professionals. Talk to your state or local health department before taking action to remove lead hazards.

Changes in the diet are often part of a treatment plan.

Learn more...

#### KEEP HOBBIES SAFE

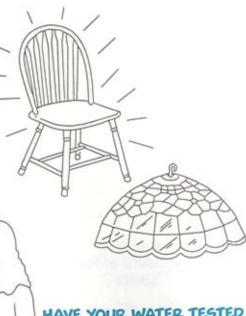
If you refinish furniture, make stained glass, or have another lead-related hobby:

· Wash clothes separately from family laundry.

· Follow all safety guidelines for products that contain lead.

· Don't allow children to play in the area.

0



#### HAVE YOUR WATER TESTED

Contact your local or state health department or a local testing laboratory. If you suspect a lead hazard, it may help to:

- · Let cold water run for a few minutes before using it for cooking or drinking.
- · Use only cold water for cooking or drinking.
- · Buy a filter that is certified for lead removal.

#### OTHER TIPS

- · Don't burn painted wood.
- · Don't allow children to eat snow or icicles.

# SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



### 500 --

# PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM THE HAZARDS OF LEAD

- ✓ LEARN ABOUT LEAD and its effects on children.
- TAKE YOUR CHILD FOR SCREENINGS at the proper times.
- FOLLOW
  ALL ADVICE
  from health and safety
  officials concerning
  lead exposure.
- ✓ PREVENT HEALTH PROBLEMS with a healthy diet and actions that limit exposure.

Make sure your child grows up lead-safe!





# INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) 1-800-433-0746

